

## Amendments to the Specification

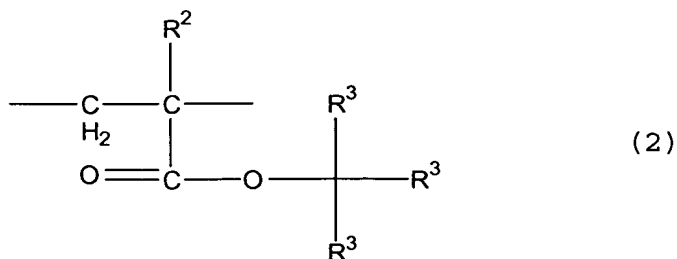
Please insert the following new paragraph at the first line of the first page of the specification after the title.

### RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a nationalization of PCT application PCT/JP2003/009721 filed on July 31, 2003, claiming priority to Japanese Application No.2002-226304 filed on August 2, 2002, and Japanese Application No.2002-285724 filed on September 30, 2002.

Please amend the paragraph from page 35 to page 36 as follows:

As a method for introducing the acid anhydride group (c), preferably, a precursor of the acid anhydride group (c) is introduced into the acrylic block copolymer and then cyclized. As a nonlimiting example, the acid anhydride group is preferably introduced by melt-kneading cyclization, at a temperature of 180°C to 300°C, of an acrylic block copolymer (A') comprising a methacrylic polymer block (a) and a ~~methacrylic~~acrylic polymer block (b), at least one of these polymer blocks (a) and (b) containing at least one unit represented by formula (2):



(wherein R<sup>2</sup> represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group, and R<sup>3</sup>s each represent a hydrogen atom, a methyl group, or a phenyl

group and may be the same or different as long as at least one of R<sup>3</sup>s is a methyl group).

Please amend the paragraph on page 50 as follows:

Among these complexes, copper complexes are preferred from the viewpoint of cost and reaction controllability. Examples of copper(I) compounds include cuprous chloride, cuprous bromide, cuprous iodide, cuprous cyanide, cuprous oxide, and cuprous perchlorate. Among these compounds, cuprous chloride and cuprous bromide are preferred from the viewpoint of polymerization controllability. When a copper (I) compound is used, a ligand may be added for increasing catalytic activity. Examples of such a ligand include 2,2'-bipyridyl compounds such as 2,2'-bipyridyl and its derivatives (for example, 4,4'-dinoryl-2,2'-bipyridyl and 4,4'-di(5-noryl)-2,2'-bipyridyl); 1,10-phenanthroline compounds such as 1,10-phenanthroline and its derivatives (for example, 4,7-dinoryl-1,10-phenanthroline and 5,6-dinoryl-1,10-phenanthroline); and polyamines such as ~~tetramethyldiethylenetriamine~~ tetramethylethylenediamine (TMEDA), pentamethyldiethylenetriamine, and hexamethyl(2-aminoethyl)amine.

Please amend the paragraph from page 57 to page 58 as follows:

The reaction solution obtained by polymerization contains a mixture of a polymer and a metal complex. Therefore, an organic acid containing a carboxyl group or a sulfonyl group is added to the reaction solution to produce a ~~metalsalt~~ with the metal complex so that the salt with the metal complex can be removed as a solid by filtration or the like. Then, the impurities such as the acid remaining in the solution are removed by adsorption with basic activated alumina, a basic adsorbent, a solid inorganic acid, an anion exchange resin, or a cellulose anion exchanger to produce a solution of the acrylic block copolymer.

Please amend the paragraph from page 60 to page 62 as follows:

The cross-linked rubber (B) is added to the acrylic block copolymer (A) to impart rubber elasticity to the acrylic block copolymer (A) and improve the physical properties thereof, such as low-temperature properties, or the acrylic block copolymer (A) is added to the cross-linked rubber (B) to impart thermoplasticity to the cross-linked rubber and improve the processability and recycle property of the cross-linked rubber (B). The thermoplastic resin (C) and/or the thermoplastic elastomer (D) is added to the acrylic block copolymer (A) to control the hardness of the acrylic block copolymer (A) and improve the physical properties thereof,

such as mechanical properties and low-temperature properties, or the acrylic block copolymer (A) is added as a softener to the thermoplastic resin (C) and/or the thermoplastic elastomer (D) to control the hardness of the thermoplastic resin (C) and/or the thermoplastic elastomer (D) while maintaining the high elastic modulus and improving the compression set. The acrylic block copolymer (A) is added as a compatibilizer to at least two types of the cross-linked rubber (B) and/or the thermoplastic resin (C) and/or the thermoplastic elastomer (D) to improve mechanical properties by utilizing the reactivity of the acrylic block copolymer (A). The lubricant (E) and the inorganic filler (G) are added to the acrylic block copolymer (A) or its composition to decrease the surface frictionality of the acrylic block copolymer (A) or its composition, to improve the mechanical properties such as elastic modulus, and further to improve processability. The stabilizer (G) can be used for preventing thermal deterioration or ~~acid~~oxidative deterioration in processing, or improving the heat resistance and weather resistance of products.

Please amend the paragraph from page 65 to page 66 as follows:

When the lubricant (E), the inorganic filler (F), and the stabilizer (G) are added to the acrylic block copolymer (A) or its composition, the contents of the lubricant (E), the inorganic filler (F), and the stabilizer (G) are preferably 0.01 parts by weight to 50 parts by weight, 0.01 parts by weight to 300 parts by weight, and 0.01 parts by weight to 15

part by weight, respectively, based on 100 parts by weight of the acrylic block copolymer (A) or its composition. More preferably, the contents of the lubricant (E) and the inorganic filler (F) are preferably 0.1 parts by weight to 30 parts by weight and 0.1 parts by weight to 100 parts by weight, respectively, based on 100 parts by weight of the acrylic block copolymer (A) or its composition. When the content of the lubricant (E) is less than 0.01 parts by weight, surface frictionality may not decrease. When the content of the lubricant (E) exceeds 50 parts by weight, the lubricant may bleed out from the acrylic block copolymer (A) or its composition, or oil resistance may deteriorate. When the content of the inorganic filler (F) is less than 0.01 parts by weight, the mechanical properties such as elastic modulus may not be sufficiently improved. When the content of the inorganic filler (F) exceeds 300 parts by weight, tensile elongation may decrease, or compression set may degrade. When the content of the stabilizer (G) is less than 0.01 parts by weight, the effect of preventing heat deterioration and acidoxidative deterioration in processing and improving the heat resistance and weather resistance of a product may become insufficient. When the content of the stabilizer (G) exceeds 15 parts by weight, the mechanical properties of the acrylic block copolymer (A) or its composition may deteriorate or coloring may occur.

Please amend the paragraph from page 79 to page 80 as follows:

As the acrylic block copolymer (A) of the present invention, acrylic block copolymers having hardness in a wide range can be produced by controlling the types of the constituent monomers and the composition ratio between the methacrylic polymer block (a) and the acrylic polymer block (b). When an acrylic block copolymer having low hardness and flexibility is produced in the form of a powder or pellets, blocking may occur. Therefore, when the composition comprising the acrylic block copolymer (A) and at least one selected from the group consisting of the cross-linked rubber (B), the thermoplastic resin (C), the thermoplastic elastomer (D), the lubricant (E), the inorganic filler (F), and the stabilizer (G) is produced in the form of a powder or pellet, any of various ~~lubricants~~anti-blocking agents may be coated for preventing blocking. Specific examples of the ~~lubricant~~anti-blocking agent include the lubricant (E), calcium carbonate, talc, kaoline, alumina, aluminum hydroxide, and acrylic polymer fine particles. At least one selected from these compounds is preferably used. In view of cost, calcium carbonate and talc are preferred. In particular, when the methacrylic polymer block (a) of a methacrylic block copolymer comprises methyl methacrylate as a main component, a polymethyl methacrylate resin powder is preferably used as the ~~lubricant~~anti-blocking agent because the addition of the

~~lubricant~~anti-blocking agent possibly has substantially no influence on the physical properties of products.

Please amend the paragraph from page 80 to page 81 as follows:

In the present invention, the ~~lubricant~~anti-blocking agent may be added to a powder or pellets by a method in which the powder or pellets are produced without the ~~lubricant~~anti-blocking agent, and then the ~~lubricant~~anti-blocking agent is applied to the powder or pellets, or a method in which the ~~lubricant~~anti-blocking agent is coated during production of the powder or pellets.

Please amend the paragraph from page 81 to page 82 as follows:

Examples of the method in which the pellets are produced without the ~~lubricant~~anti-blocking agent, and then the ~~lubricant~~anti-blocking agent is coated to the pellets include a method of dispersing the polymer pellets in a solvent containing the ~~lubricant~~anti-blocking agent, a method of spraying a solvent containing the ~~lubricant~~anti-blocking agent to the pellets, and a method of directly mixing the pellets and the ~~lubricant~~anti-blocking agent. Examples of the method in which the ~~lubricant~~anti-blocking agent is coated during production of the pellets include an underwater cutting method and a strand cutting method. In the underwater cutting method

for producing the pellets, it is necessary to prevent blocking of the pellets near a die or a cutter in some cases. In this case, a polymer is cut in circulating cooling water, and thus a blocking property can be improved by adding at least one ~~lubricant~~anti-blocking agent to the circulating cooling water. In the strand cutting method, generally, a resin discharged from the die reaches a high temperature, and thus a strand is cooled with an aqueous phase to solidify the resin before cutting. Therefore, the ~~lubricant~~anti-blocking agent is previously added to the aqueous phase and dispersed therein, and the strand is immersed in the aqueous phase to coat the ~~lubricant~~anti-blocking agent on the surface. In this case, the effect of preventing blocking of the pellets can be exhibited.

Please amend Examples 32 and 33 of page 147 as follows:

Examples 32 and 33

In Example 32, 10 parts by weight of cross-linked rubber 2 (powdery NBR, produced by JSR Co., Ltd., PN20HA) was added to 100 parts by weight of the carboxyl-containing block copolymer (20C3A6). In Example 33, 10 parts by weight of cross-linked rubber 1 (silicone-acryl composite rubber, produced by Mitsubishi Rayon Co., Ltd., S-2001) was added to 100 parts by weight of the block copolymer (20C3A6). Each of the resultant mixtures was kneaded for 10 minutes with Labo



Plastomill (produced by Toyo Seiki Co., Ltd.) set at 180°C at a rotational speed of 100 rpm to obtain a bulk sample.

Evaluation was performed by the same method as in ~~Example 32~~  
Example 31.

Please amend Table 9 and the following paragraph as follows:

Table 9

	Example 41	Comparative Example 16
Polymer	<del>MBAMBA7</del>	<del>MBAMBA7</del>
Thermoplastic resin	3012U	3012U
Compatibilizer	20ANBA7	-
Strength at break (MPa)	5.29	6.27
Elongation at break (%)	295.2	226

Table 9 shows the test results of Example 41 and Comparative Example 16. Table 9 indicates that according to the present invention, the composition containing the acid anhydride group-containing block copolymer has an improved elongation at break, and thus desirably acts as the compatibilizer between UBESTA 3012U and ~~MBAMBA7~~.